



STATEMENT REGARDING
Senate Bill 175: An Act Establishing the Connecticut Competitiveness
Council

Commerce Committee
February 25th, 2010

The MetroHartford Alliance is Hartford's Chamber of Commerce and the region's economic development leader. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, institutions of higher education, and 34 municipalities. The Alliance's mission is to ensure that the Hartford Region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, talent and capital so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, work, play, and raise a family.

We write today regarding Senate Bill 175, *An Act Establishing the Connecticut Competitiveness Council*. This legislation assigns a Competitiveness Council the charge of developing a strategic plan to "promote the competitiveness of the state's industry and economy." Having participated in the hearing process for the Department of Economic and Community Development's statewide strategic plan for economic development, we are hopeful that the work that was performed by this agency will be captured in the Council's planning process rather than duplicating efforts or expenditures by the state.

There are points in this legislation that we would like to offer specific support to. In section 1(g), it is stated that the strategic plan must incorporate analysis of the state's cluster initiative. We work closely with the Insurance and Financial Services Cluster and have observed firsthand the value and success of this cluster's commitment to pursuing workforce development and training initiatives,

as well as economic development statewide. We feel strongly that the cluster model should continue and support analysis of this work to substantiate this position. Additionally, under subsection (g) in section 1 of the bill we suggest that the functions of the Council specifically include research and forecasting to support the strategy.

The MetroHartford Alliance is highly supportive of any efforts to strengthen the economic climate in our state to cultivate more entrepreneurs and privately held businesses. Angel networks are a vital part of this strategy, and tax incentives to encourage this type of investment are an important piece of this policy goal. To that end, we support the establishment of an Innovation Network in Connecticut within available resources. However, we would like to ask for the Committee's consideration in adding an appointment to the Competitiveness Council from a chamber of commerce or regional economic development organization as well as the appointment of an economist.

We thank you for your consideration.